

Women Warriors Newsletter

Women Veterans Program Providence VA Medical Center

Bay View Elementary/Middle School Chorus *WOWS* the Veterans at "Tents to Tea"

Veterans Find Inspiration in the Girl's Voices

By Carol Costa

Bay View Academy Consultant



As part of the year-long Veterans initiative, *She Served Too*, students from Bay View Academy performed at *From Tents to Tea* at the Providence VA Medical Center. Classroom #3 was filled with sounds of patriotic and inspirational songs and was truly appreciated by the Veterans in the crowd. But before the chorus

took to the stage, the audience was invited to participate in the *Women Warrior Drumming Circle* group starring Denise Fragoza, Judy Feightner, and Melodie Mathews. The *Women Warriors* explained how they make their drums from old five gallon water jugs and ordinary household items, which they beautifully decorate. "What a terrific idea. I see drum building in the future at Bay View!" said Kerrin Nagle, Bay View performing arts teacher and co-choir director. The girls eagerly took up the home-made drums and joined in. Meanwhile, the Warriors explained the elements of a drum circle, which contain heartbeat, walking, skipping and dancing—each with a distinct rhythm. "The drumming circle was really cool," said Bristol's Christina Conley, a 7th grade student at Bay View. Bay View Chorus Director, Stephanie Smith, noted the girls' enthusiasm and preparation for the special event. "The girls have worked so hard on their inspirational medleys and feel extremely privileged to share their talents with our women Veterans today." The work certainly paid off, and an appreciative Veteran offered praise directly to the girls: "What you did here today is so important;

each of you is an inspiration and your music so uplifting. I thank you, and we all thank you. Music is a valuable part of the military; you are wonderful for sharing your talents." (cont. page 4)



Spring 2011



Women's Health Care Team

Dr. Dawna Blake, Women's Health Care Director

Pilar Capili, RN, Clinic Coordinator

Beth Grady, LCSW, Women Veterans Program Manager

Dr Jon Bas, Provider

Karen Chase, NP, Provider

Dr. Joan Karl, Provider

Dr. Neha Pathak, Provider

Joyce Simon, NP, Provider

Dr. Natalie Mariano, Hyannis CBOC, Provider

Dr. Terri Tamase, Middletown CBOC, Provider





"Triumphant T-Shirts:" A Clothesline Project

APRIL IS SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH



In an effort to raise awareness about Military Sexual Trauma (MST), sexual assault and sexual abuse, and its impact on Veterans, the Providence VA Medical Center is planning "Triumphant T-Shirts: A Clothesline Project." The Clothesline Project is a visual display used internationally for the past 21 years. It allows survivors to share their stories about the impact of sexual violence on their lives by decorating a shirt in a way that reflects their experience. Shirts are then hung side-by-side to "Break the Silence" and to bear witness to sexual violence.

Both **male and female** Veterans are invited to participate in the Clothesline Project.

When Will Shirts Be Created?

Wednesdays, April 20th and April 27, 1:00 p.m. — 3:00 p.m., Trailer #36 (PRRC Trailer) **or** by arrangement (Call Judith Berger (401) 273-7100, ext. 2731 or Beth Grady, (401) 273-7100, ext. 6191

When Will Shirts Be Displayed?

Thursday, April 28, 2011, 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
Classroom 3, 5th floor

Citing a 2000 study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that one in six women in the United States reported experiencing an attempted or completed rape at some time in their lives. Sexual violence, or sexual trauma, can have a profound impact on a victim's physical and mental health. It is associated with an increased risk of a range of sexual and reproductive health problems and can lead to other long-term health problems, including chronic pain, headaches, and stomach problems. Victims of sexual trauma are more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol or engage in risky sexual behavior. In some cases, anger and stress stemming from such abuse trigger eating disorders, depression, and even suicide. VA refers to sexual assault as repeated, threatening sexual harassment during military service as military sexual trauma (MST). Approximately one out of five women who visits VA facilities tells his/her VA health care provider that he/she has experienced sexual trauma in the military. To help Veterans recover from MST, VA provides free care for related physical and mental health conditions. Veterans do not need to have a service-connected VA disability rating; they may be able to receive MST care even if they are not eligible for other VA care. Every VA facility has a designated MST Coordinator who serves as a contact person for MST-related issues. This person can help Veterans find and access VA services and programs, state and federal benefits, and community resources. Every VA facility also has providers knowledgeable about treatment for the effects of MST. For more information about services available, Veterans can speak with their existing VA health care provider, contact the MST Coordinator at their nearest VA Medical Center (Providence VAMC MST Coordinator is Judith Berger, (401) 273-7100, ext. 2731), or contact their local Vet Center.

References:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/images/sv%20factsheet.pdf> (CDC Fact Sheet citing National Violence Against Women Survey)
http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/SV_factsheet-a.pdf

Kimerling, R., Gima, K., Smith, M. W., Street, A., & Frayne, S. (2007). The Veterans Health Administration and military sexual trauma. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(12), 2160-2166.



Share, Share, everywhere!



If there is only **ONE** number you **JOT** down,
THIS is it!

Veterans Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255

The *Veterans Crisis Line*, formally known as the Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline, provides confidential counseling and referrals for Veterans and their families 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This hotline has answered more than 310,000 calls and made 10,000 life-saving rescues since it's inception. **JOT IT DOWN!**



Do you have a family member who would be honored to support you? *The Ladies auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States* extends a warm and friendly invitation to all Veterans and family members who are eligible. Their mission is to serve YOU and your LOVED ONES thru activities that "celebrate the freedoms we enjoy in America." Please call Theresa Christy, Department of RI, Senior Vice President and Membership Chair, (401-475-0803), for more information.



We would like to invite you to visit MyHealthVet, our award winning website with 24/7 online access at www.myhealth.va.gov. My HealthVet enables you to access trusted and secure VA health information to better manage

your overall health and wellness and put the power of prevention in your hands. Registration takes only a few minutes. After registration, you will have the ability to create, record, and track your health information and your family's health history, enter past and present military service events, keep food and activity journals; record, track, and graph vital signs, and maintain other health measures.

For the advanced features of My HealthVet you will need to complete a one-time process called In-Person-Authentication (IPA). This requires online registration and a personal visit to the VA Health Care facility to verify your identity. Examples of these features include refills of your medication prescriptions by name and not just the prescription number, VA Wellness Reminders, and the ability to have secure messaging between you and your primary care team. Another exciting feature (anticipated by the end of summer 2011) will be the opportunity for registered Veterans to view Lab results within their My HealthVet account. Other features available include viewing VA benefits as well as finding a spirituality center—a place for a variety of people, faith groups, and beliefs to find greater satisfaction with life, more fulfillment, and enhanced well-being.

MyHealthVet is 24/7/365 Access to Health Care--its quick, easy, and it is for YOU!!

Eileen M. Kirshenbaum RN, BSN, M.Ed

My HealthVet Facility Coordinator 401-273-7100, ext. 3693.

Numbers to Know; Numbers to Grow

Eligibility & Enrollments
401-457-3300

OEF/OIF Program Manager:
401-273-7100, ext. 6137

Veterans CRISIS Line
(formerly called the Mental Health hotline)
1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Telephone Assistant Program
(TAP) Line
401-457-3336
1-866-590-2976

Homeless Resources
401-273-7100, ext. 3553

Hotline for Homeless Veterans
1-877-424-3838

State of Rhode Island
Department of Human
Services Division of Veterans
Affairs
401-254-8460

Veterans Benefits
Administration, Women
Veterans Coordinator
401-223-3651

Human services and helping
agencies
2-1-1

VET CENTERS:
Warwick: 401-739-0167
New Bedford: 508-999-6920
Hyannis: 508-778-0124



Veterans Find Inspiration in the Girl's Voices (cont.)

Providence VA Medical Center
830 Chalkstone Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island 02908
(401) 273-7100

Hyannis CBOC
VA Primary Care Center
233 Stevens Street
Hyannis, MA 02601-3766
Phone: (508) 771-3190

Middletown CBOC
One Corporate Place
(West Main Road at Northgate Road)
Middletown, RI 02842
Phone: (401) 847-6239

New Bedford CBOC
175 Elm Street
New Bedford, Mass 02740
Phone: (508) 994-5489



The sentiments and appreciation of the Veterans were not lost on the girls, as noted by 7th grader Camilla Macera of Hope, "You could truly feel the gratitude in their words to us. It was so meaningful to us to know that our

music and our voices made a difference today."

Bay View Elementary/Middle School Principal Cindy Lorincz was pleased the girls provided music and camaraderie at the event. "We are so thrilled to be part of this "From Tents to Tea" program. It is only through collaboration and service that our young women will truly understand the sacrifices of so many service men and women. Encouraging our girls to do this outreach speaks directly to Bay View's mission. I am pleased our young ladies got as much from this visit as did our Veterans."



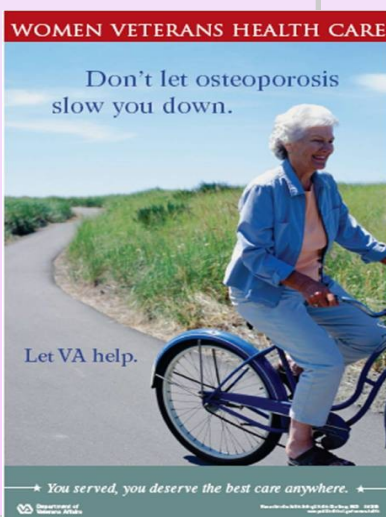
FREE TICKETS!



To continue the schools support of **She Served Too**: A celebration of women Veterans, 30 free tickets are available for Veterans and their families to attend the April 29th Friday show (10 a.m.) of Manhattan at the Bay's cabaret performance, "It's a Wonderful World." Call Beth Grady at 401-273-7100, ext 6191 to reserve your tickets!



OSTEOPOROSIS, a disease characterized by low bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue, is a major public health threat for 44 million Americans—68 percent of whom are women. Osteoporosis can lead to fragile bones and an increased risk of fractures. It's known as a "silent disease" because it usually progresses without symptoms until a fracture occurs or one or more vertebrae (bones in the spine) collapse. However, medical experts believe that osteoporosis is largely preventable. In addition, people who have already been diagnosed with osteoporosis can take steps to prevent or slow further progress of the disease. VA can assist Women Veterans of all ages in the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis. Your Primary Care Provider will screen you for a **bone density scan**, a very easy, pain-free test that can be performed at any time in radiology.



The Providence VA Medical Center is committed to meeting the unique needs of women Veterans by delivering the highest quality health care to each woman, while offering her the privacy, dignity, and sensitivity to gender-specific needs that she deserves. Our full time Women Veterans Program Manager is ready to assist you in getting timely access to the health care you need. Beth Grady, LCSW, Women Veteran Program Manager, (401) 273-7100, ext. 6191



Veterans Crisis Line
1-800-273-8255

